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ABSTRACT

The paper highlights four successful instructional/programing strategies for secondary level handicapped students in rural Wyoming. The Vocational Education/Special Education Project (VESEP) I provides a vocational/special education curriculum which encourages cooperative teaching between vocational and special education staff while addressing vocational needs of students. VESEPII complements VESEPI by addressing prevocational enabling skills and student occupational interest. Project STILE (Strategies to Increase Learning Efficiency) is designed to improve the academic functioning and life long learning skills of the learning disabled adolescent while stressing cooperation between the special and general educators. The Career Education Resources for Teaching Students (CERTS) program incorporates a 4 year curriculum addressing prevocational/self awareness, limited inhouse career exploration, expanded onsite exploration, and vocational skill building. Students are encouraged to remain in regular classes as much as possible; however, the CERTS program offers some options through cooperation, between the content and special education teachers, when a student's individualized education program calls for modification within an academic area. Finally, a cooperative strategy between the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and Johnson County (Wyoming) Public Schools benefits the student by a shared assessment results (therefore no duplication of effort) and continuation of services. (SB)

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POTENTIALLY SUCCESSFUL

SECONDARY SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS

PRESENTATION: COUNCIL FOR EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN
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Marilyn R. White, Ph.D.

POTENTIALLY SUCCESSFUL SECONDARY SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS

ABSTRACT

This presentation highlights four instructional/programming strategies for secondary level handicapped students which have been found successful in Johnson County, Wyoming, School District #1. Within this rural area, it is often difficult to provide a variety of academic and vocational experiences for handicapped students. Through the implementation of these strategies, handicapped adolescents have been successfully placed in employment situations as wage earners.

The four strategies include: VESEP I and II (Vocational Education/ Special Education Project, Central Michigan University), a prevocational/ vocational program designed to encourage cooperative teaching between special education and vocational education teachers; Project STILE (Strategies To Increase Learning Efficiency, Lawrence High School, Lawrence, Kansas), a program of "learning how to learn" designed for learning disabled youth; CERTS (Career Education Resources for Teaching Students, Johnson County Schools Special Services, Buffalo, Wyoming), a four year curriculum designed to provide academic/ vocational opportunities for handicapped secondary level students; and a discussion of a cooperative working agreement between the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and Johnson County Schools special services.

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this presentation is to highlight four instructional/ programming strategies for secondary level handicapped students which have been found successful in Johnson County, Wyoming, School District #1. Although several curricular approaches were attempted in an effort to provide appropriate programs for these students, no solution was found which addressed the problems of prevocational/vocational instruction, course offerings for limited numbers of students, deficits of handicapped students in tool subject and study skills and necessary curricular modification for general education classes.

The demographic characteristics of Johnson County present certain influences on programming. This is a rural area with low density population. Some of the additional resulting educational restraints are: restricted course offerings; teacher and student scheduling demands; difficulty in justifying case loads; lack of sufficient vocational exploratory and training sites for handicapped; problems in assisting students in finding job placements upon graduation.

The search for answers to some of the above named considerations resulted in the adoption of the following programs:

VESEP I and II, Project STILE, CERTS, and a cooperative agreement between the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and Johnson County Schools. Certainly, none of these solve all the curricular needs associated with programming for secondary level handicapped students enrolled in Johnson County. Each of these strategies does, however, open many opportunities for alternative and creative avenues.

VESEP I and II

In 1973, the state of Michigan adopted the Michigan Special Education Code which contained the following requirement.

> A written vocational education plan...shall set forth educational goals, job activities, related subjects, standards of attainment, time and duration of the program and wages to be paid to the handicapped person...(VESEP Information Brochure, 1976).

The Michigan Career Education Model already provided for self-awareness, occupational awareness, decision making, career exploration and career preparation. It lacked the capability to provide opportunities for handicapped students "to explore various occupational options and to prepare for jobs which meet the needs of the individual and the needs of society" (VESEP Information Brochure, 1976). The VESEP I and II Projects (Vocational Education/Special Education Project), Central Michigan University, was developed in response to this mandate. VESEP I has as its purpose to provide a vocational/special education curriculum which encourages cooperative teaching between the vocational staff and special education staff while addressing the vocational needs of handicapped students. VESEP II identifies prevocational skills necessary for success in the entry level tasks of VESEP I; offers programmatic suggestions for strengthening the prevocational skills; and provides a means of determining the vocational interests of the student. Both of these programs are detailed,thorough and comprehensive in scope. A report such as this does not do justice to the intricacies of the work; but rather only serves to offer the reader an overview.

VESEP I is organized around eleven occupational clusters and subclusters. Relative to each of these clusters are three sets of tasks: employment tasks which are generic to the work field; common cluster tasks which are commonly necessary for one to work successfully within a job cluster; and, lastly, entry level tasks which are specific tasks within a subcluster. An illustration may

provide clarity. Within the "clothing/textile service" occupational cluster, four subclusters can be identified: clothing service, clothing construction, home furnishing and upholstery. Requisite to functioning within any of these occupational subclusters is skill in using the telephone. The generalization can be taken further in that the use of the telephone is globally required in the world of work. Therefore, this skill is identified as an "employment task". The ability to replace buttons, hooks and snaps is a skill needed across all four of the "clothing/textile service" subclusters. Hence it is known as a "common cluster task." The clothing construction subcluster includes two occupations, seamstress and alteration tailor, as listed in the Dictionary of Occupational Titles. Each of these occupations has specific requirements; i.e., a seamstress must be able to stitch hems and linings; an alteration tailor must be able to alter the waistline of trousers. Such specific tasks are known as "entry level tasks."

Instructional modules have been prepared for each identified task, be it an "employment task," a "common cluster task" or an "entry level task." Each module has seven components: behavioral task knowledges/task skills; instructional methods; employment related competencies; instructional materials; language of the task; quantitative concepts; and suggestions. It is through the adaptation of these modules that the team teaching concept between the vocational and special educator becomes a reality.

VESEP II complements VESEP I by addressing two major areas: prevocational enabling skills and student occupational interest. The enablers are listed in ten behavioral areas: gross motor, fine motor, perceptual sensory, language arts, quantitative, comprehensive, health and hygiene, personal/emotional, home

responsibility and school responsibility. By matching the limitations or capabilities of handicapped students in the prevocational areas with the prerequisites of the occupational tasks, the career counselor's responsibility of guidance becomes more data based.

The student's occupational interest can be assessed by using the "Interest Survey Scramble Board." This piece of material is functional regardless of the handicapping condition sustained by the student. By combining the results of the interest survey and the enabling skills assessment, a student profile can be developed which can serve as an informal instrument for planning the student's individualized educational program.

In summary, the VESEP I and II offer the following plus much more.

- Suggestions for planning and developing cooperative programs.
- Considerations for programming over all handicapping conditions.
- A listing of prevocational enabling skills and a system of identifying by entry level task those enablers that are essential.
- A means of gathering information related to student occupational interest.
- A student profile which reflects enabling skill performance and occupational interest.
- A listing of general employment-related competencies and task-related competencies.
- Identification of occupational tasks by occupational clusters or

by entry level.

- Instructional modules for each task (employment, common cluster, or entry).
- A system for monitoring student progress.

The VESEP I and II provide a basis for a comprehensive awareness, exploration and skill building prevocational/vocational program for middle and high school level handicapped students.

Project STILE

Project STILE was developed in 1979 by the project staff at Lawrence High School, Lawrence, Kansas. This curriculum was designed "...to improve the academic functioning and life-long learning skills of the learning disabled adolescent..." (Project STILE, 1979). Like the VESEP I and II, the philosophy of Project STILE stresses cooperation between the special and general educators.

The "Learning Strategy Approach" utilized within this program is based on the following assumptions.

- Secondary level students must adjust to a variety of circumstances that are typical of almost all classrooms.
- Secondary level students are independent, intrinsically motivated learners.
- Secondary level students possess certain skills in reading, writing, listening, computation, etc.
- Secondary level students have the social skills necessary for independent learning.
- Secondary level learning disabled students sustain a mismatch between ability to perform and performance expectations.

The tenets of this program suggest three things. Learning disabled students must be taught "how to learn." Goals of a learning disability program should relate to lifelong learning needs. Thirdly, mastery of the learning strategies should be judged in relation to general, not resource room, instruction. The demands of secondary level education were analyzed and a group of "crucial learning skills" identified. These crucial learning skills were then sorted into thirteen instructional units which include such general categories as time management, test skills, notetaking, textbook usage, etc.

The first requirement toward implementation of this program is to determine for each instructional unit the level of student deficit and the importance of the skills to the student. A system of instructional decision making is provided which allows for input from the student as well as the regular classroom or special teacher/s. After a priority listing of units is made, the special educator can begin instruction in "how to learn."

For each of the eleven instructional units, goals, instructional objectives and activities are suggested. As an aide to those planning the instruction, an eight step instructional procedure is offered which is designed to encourage the student to learn the skills, to apply the strategies and to generalize the strategies to the content areas.

In summary, it could be stated that while Project STILE was developed with the handicapped in mind, it offers a set of learning strategies which could benefit most students. The program depends on interaction and cooperation between special and general education. The handicapped adolescent who masters and applies the strategies suggested by this program is more capable of coping with the inherent demands of secondary education.

CERTS

The CERTS program (Career Education Resources for Teaching Students) was developed through the area of special services in Johnson County, Wyoming, School District #1. It grew out of a need for a curricular system which provides for the following:

- A means of constructing individual courses which meet the needs of handicapped students but which stay within the general academic areas required for graduation;
- A vocational/special education secondary four year curriculum which addresses prevocational skills, self awareness, decision making, career awareness, career exploration and job training;
- The potential of demonstrating to the student his/her academic needs by relating the skills to a work situation;
- A way of extending the career exploration and training possibilities presently offered in the secondary schools;
- A method of identifying community resources which could expand the instructional capabilities of the staff.

Obviously, a comprehensive scheme was needed to meet all of the above named considerations. Of high priority was the utilization of community resources in the instructional process. Several delivery models including the "Experience-Based Career Education" program (Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory) were investigated (N.W.R.E.L., 1975). EBCE seemed to most nearly match Johnson County's needs for the following reasons. It is an individualized and personalized program, which is community based, has a comprehensive integrated curriculum and which emphasizes career development. Modifications were needed to accommodate the

handicapped secondary population of Johnson County Schools. These modifications resulted in the CERTS program.

CERTS is built around a four year curriculum which addresses the following: prevocational/self awareness, 9th grade; limited in-house career exploration, 10th grade; expanded on-site exploration, 11th grade; vocational skill building, 12th grade. The identification of grade levels is not meant to be limiting but only to serve as a guide so that skills are presented in a sequential manner. The program has the flexibility to allow students to enter at any level regardless of academic standing. Students are encouraged to remain in regular classes as much as possible. However, when a student's individualized educational program calls for modification within an academic area, the CERTS program offers some options. Individually designed courses can be developed and approved for credit with the cooperation of the content teacher and special educator. The basic four year curriculum of CERTS can serve as elective or required courses. And, finally, as the student reaches the junior or senior year, courses can be built around the community resources available for career development. The latter alternative provides an opportunity for students to relate interpersonal and academic skills to actual working conditions.

In summary, the CERTS program depends on staff cooperation as do the VESEP I and II and Project STILE. Like VESEP, CERTS can extend instruction into the community thereby enhancing career/vocational opportunities. In Johnson County, both VESEP and Project STILE are incorporated into the implementation of CERTS.

Division of Vocational Rehabilitation/Johnson County Schools

Although many secondary level handicapped students enjoy appropriate programming while in school and even to age twenty-one, there still remains the problem of gainful employment after the school district relinquishes responsibility. The last section of this paper will disclose a cooperative strategy which has enjoyed success in this community. The two agencies involved are the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) and Johnson County Schools.

The procedures are very simple. Early in the student's junior year, the DVR counselor is invited to sit on the study committee assigned to the student. If, in the opinion of the counselor, the student's characteristics warrant further investigation of DVR eligibility, and, if the student and parent/s desire affiliation with DVR, a formal referral to that agency is made from the school. Permission is obtained from the parent/s to exchange information between agencies. Assessment data gathered by the school can then be made available to DVR. Upon receipt of this data, a determination can be made by the counselor for the need of any additional assessment. If the student meets the eligibility requirements as a DVR client, the counselor becomes a permanent member of the study team. In this capacity, he/she assists in programming and placement decisions and in the career/vocational development of the student. Upon graduation from high school, the student remains a DVR client thereby eliminating a break in services.

This shared responsibility process has been in effect in Johnson County for over four years. Many benefits have been realized but most important are those related to the student. Since assessment results can be shared, the student is spared a duplication of this effort. By eliminating the break in services, the

handicapped student is not required to adapt to new personnel involved in his/her case. Also, upon graduation, most students have some source of income as well as supervision and help in maintaining employment.

SUMMARY

It is rare when a program or process which has succeeded in one environment can be totally adopted into another environment. Such expectations are not held in regard to this discussion. If some creative thoughts can be stimulated and some encouraging comments afforded, the intended purpose will have been served.

REFERENCES

Experienced-Based Career Education. Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, Portland, Oregon, 1975.

Project STILE, Learning How To Learn - Methods, Objectives, Activities. Lawrence High School. Lawrence, Kansas, 1979.

VESEP II, Information Brochure. 1976. Central Michigan University, Mt. Pleasant, Michigan.

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More information can be obtained at the following address:

VESEP I
225 Sloan Hall
Central Michigan Univ.
Mt. Pleasant, Michigan 48859

Project STILE
Lawrence High School
1901 Louisiana
Lawrence, Kansas 66044

VESEP II
Special Education Services
P.O. Box 30009
Lansing, Michigan 48909

CERTS
Johnson County Schools, Special Services
58 N. Adams
Buffalo, Wyoming 82834

Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
Soldiers and Sailors' Home
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